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Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

In Recognition of Extraordinary Service....

The Board would like to sincerely thank Wiley J. Christian III, PT 1st Congressional District, for his ongoing leadership on the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy from November, 2012 through October, 2020 where he served out a partial term (10/22/12-10/6/2015) as Board Secretary and then completed a full term (10/6/2015 – 10/6/2020) as Chairman of the Board and as a member of the Violations Committee. Wiley previously served on the Board from October 6, 2002 through October 6, 2007 also in the capacity of Board Chair. He is the only Board member to have worked with every Executive Director to date. Wiley was instrumental in authoring numerous amendments to the Administrative Code Chapter 700-X-3 Professional Conduct, including violations and roles and responsibilities of licensees during his tenure. He worked diligently to ensure consistency in the implementation of corrective action among and between everyone to ensure public protection. All persons who have practiced in the state over the last 20 years, as well as future licensees, have benefitted from his wisdom, tenacity, and thoughtful approaches to all business that came before the Board.

Wiley is a 1983 graduate of Tuskegee Institute, Tuskegee, Alabama and was licensed in 1984 as a Physical Therapist in Alabama. He currently works as the Director of Rehab at Springhill Hospital in Mobile, Alabama and has been employed there for 20 years.

Please consider serving on the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy. Each year, the Board Chair will conduct an annual meeting open to all licensees in order to nominate and vote on five therapists for each upcoming vacancy on the Board. The list of five names are then forwarded to the Governor's office and the Governor appoints someone from the list of names. The Board consists of seven members who meet the qualifications set out in Code of Ala. 1975, S34-24-192(b). There are 4 Physical Therapists, representing different Congressional Districts across the State, and 2 Physical Therapist Assistants, representing the North and South regions of the State, and 1 consumer member.

Margaret Hemm, Consumer Member

ALABAMA BOARD OF
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Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

From the Executive Director,

First of all - Let me introduce myself, my name is Kathy Miller and I am excited to become a part of this great organization. I want to thank the Board and the selection committee for having and placing their confidence in me as ABPT moves forward. I know, as the Board has said, I have big shoes to fill...shoes you really do not replace but can only continue to build on the established foundation, move forward, improve, and grow. I do look forward to the opportunity.

As ABPT moves forward and grows, as will all of us, it will face challenges coming out of a time that has not been seen in many years. A time that has been a challenge to all PT's, PTA's and the patients that they have continued to serve. Many have faced personal issues but never lost sight of the much-needed service they provide to those that face not only a pandemic but other non-related life changing issues.

The work at the previous agency where I was employed, The Alabama Crime Victims' Compensation Commission (ACVCC), has given me an understanding of how important it is to offer hope and help to those that face unexpected and often tragic circumstances. As a Manager at ACVCC, I was able to oversee a staff that processed requests for much needed assistance to those who had been victims of violent crimes. I look forward to bringing that experience to ABPT.

When I am not working, I enjoy staying fit. Annually, I participate in the Peachtree Road Race, the 30A 10K Thanksgiving Run, the Atlanta Georgia Warrior Dash, and several others. I enjoy travelling – mostly beach trips. I love the sun, sand, and fresh air. I have a large family and always enjoy spending time with them.

Again, I await the challenge and opportunity of working with and for you as we move ABPT forward together.



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When I was in high school, almost fifty years ago, I realized my passion for physical therapy and helping others. I recall thinking when I was doing my initial observation hours in a physical therapy clinic, that I wanted to pursue physical therapy for my lifelong career – in fact, I felt it was a calling. I vowed that I would be a “physical” therapist; hands on, innovative, out of the box, learning with every patient – everyday.

Now that I have been practicing for over forty years - I have done just that. I have been and still am, a lifelong learner, shadowing leaders and icons in our profession such as James Cyriax, Stanley Paris, and John Barnes along with many others, letting my mind be a sponge to their wealth of knowledge and experience. I have over one thousand hours of continuing education on my resume and hundreds of hours getting certified in manual therapy. I don’t attend continuing education classes just to renew my annual license to practice. I attend these classes to be the best physical therapist I can be with every patient – everyday.

I believe in putting your hands on people, not just treating the pain, but searching for the source of the pain. Sometimes Doctors are so busy, they don’t have time to look for the source. The good news is they refer these patients to us. That is why it is so important for us to be thorough, state of the art, well read and studied in every aspect of the human body and how to heal it. Every patient is different, and it is our responsibility as professionals to not practice just protocol therapy. In some cases, the protocol is successful and in others it is not. I encourage my staff to be learners too, training them to be hands on, good listeners, and attentive with every patient – everyday.

I was honored to be appointed to the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy in March. I know that I will be challenged in learning what is expected of me as a Board member and in all aspects of our organization. I would challenge all of you, as Licensed physical therapists in our state, to set the bar high, continue to grow and learn, and to become true “physical” therapists with every patient – everyday.

Robert L. Fleming, Jr. PT

Fleming Rehab & Sports Medicine

Mobile, AL

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Alabama is now a Compact Privilege State

On March 18, 2021, Governor Ivey signed legislation making Alabama the 31st state to join the PT Compact. Many licensees may not have been aware the legislature was even considering a bill that would add Alabama to the list of states where the holder of a 'Compact privilege' can come to practice physical therapy without having to obtain an Alabama physical therapy license first. Three of the four states contiguous to Alabama are also PT Compact members: Mississippi, Tennessee, and Georgia. To view an interactive map showing all the states in the PT Compact, including those who are issuing compact privileges can be found here: <http://ptcompact.org/ptc-states>.

The bill was initially introduced in the 2020 legislative session, but like a lot of other bills it went nowhere due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. Senator Whatley, the Senate sponsor, reintroduced the bill in the 2021 legislative session, with the House companion bill (HB247) sponsored by Representative Parker Moore. The bill quickly gained traction because it was one of a package of bills that the Military Stability Commission put together in an effort to make Alabama friendlier to military service members. The Commission was chaired by Lt. Governor Will Ainsworth and included a number of bills to provide for the acceptance of occupational licenses from other state boards for spouses and dependents of military members.

So now what?

Well, there is a lot of work to do. Alabama cannot begin issuing Compact privileges until there are other significant changes made to the Alabama Physical Therapy Practice Act (APTPA) and the Administrative Code. The biggest hurdle will be getting approval to conduct FBI background checks on applicants. This is a requirement for anyone seeking a Compact privilege, and currently the Alabama Board of Physical Therapy does not have the authority to do this. The Board will need to do a thorough review of all its administrative rules to determine other areas that will be impacted by the compact such as fees, continuing education, and disciplinary actions. The Board office will also need to transmit information to the Physical Therapy Compact Commission (PTCC) on every person ever licensed by the State of Alabama.

The Board anticipates that it could take more than two years before Alabama will be ready to issue Compact privileges. We will provide regular updates on our progress, and of course, licensees are welcome to attend the board meetings at any time. Until then, licensees can learn more about the Physical Therapy Licensure Compact on the Federation of State Board's website here: <https://www.fsbpt.org/Free-Resources/Physical-Therapy-Licensure-Compact>.



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Alabama Board of Physical Therapy Newsletter

Wellness Program

Nathan McGriff, PTA

Liaison to Wellness Program

The Alabama Board of Physical Therapy continues to work with Dr. Mike Garver, DMD, to provide an Impaired Practitioner Wellness Program as a service to licensees in the state of Alabama. This program is designed to help licensees that are impaired by reason of illness, inebriation, excessive use of drugs, alcohol, narcotics, chemicals or other substances, or a result of a physical or mental condition. Currently, the program has 18 participants, with 16 of those entering the program by self-report. This self-reporting option provides the opportunity for a licensee to directly contact Dr. Garver and receive much needed help without jeopardizing their license. Self-reporting avoids a formal Board of PT hearing, and the subsequent reporting to the National Practitioner Data Bank. Additionally, there is no public record as participants are only known to the Board of PT by case number. For assistance, physical therapist and physical therapist assistants should contact the program director at 1-855-865-6704 (Wellness Center Hotline).

The COVID-19 pandemic brought new challenges to us all as licensees. This was also the case for the Wellness Program. Modifications were made for collections and reporting allowing virtual visits and collections to be made. We are happy to report that over the last 15 months those that entered the program were able to maintain sobriety and many participants continue to work.

Mentors continue to be fundamental in the success of the program. They allow participants to have someone to turn to that have faced those same challenges of addiction. Mentors remain anonymous and time frame for participation is at each individual's discretion. If you are interested in becoming a mentor, please contact Dr. Mike Garver at the contact below.

Michael Garver, DMD

P.O. Box 426

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Citronelle, AL 36522

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Scam artists have always been a threat, seeking to bilk good, hard-working people out of their money. This is no less true today in our modern, high-tech world where a single lapse in judgment can give a scammer access to incredible amounts of personal information. Just because you are not paranoid does not mean they are not out to get you! Scammers seek to take advantage of your hectic pace of life, luring you with those things that are most precious – your children/grandchildren, your money, your reputation, and your livelihood. Unfortunately, no area of your life is safe. A recent rash of phone calls from individuals claiming to represent the Board of Physical Therapy have proven this to be true. This article will explore how you can be diligent against their attacks.

Unfortunately, just because you do not have a computer, email account or cell phone does not exempt you from a scam attack. One of the latest attacks on the elderly comes over the telephone from an individual who claims to be a parole officer/police officer representing your grandchild. Even worse, the voice can claim to be that grandchild and sound very convincing over a faint or bad connection. The voice claims that this grandchild has gotten into a bad situation, been arrested, and desperately needs you to send money. You will be told that another person will call in a few minutes and you must pay them a specific amount of money using your credit or debit card before this grandchild can be released. Occasionally this same scam is played out claiming the grandchild has been in an accident and money is needed for medical care. Both prey upon a sense of panic and concern for someone that you love. When you follow the demands, the scammer then has access to your credit card, or worse, direct access into your bank account through your debit card. One of the best ways to avoid becoming a victim to this scam is simple awareness. Talking about this scam with your grandparent, parents, and patients is a great way to increase public awareness. In a moment of panic and concern, this scenario may sound plausible but when you have had time to think it through you are less likely to buy into it.

The Board of PT calls are just a variation of this scam. The voice on the phone claims to represent the Board and demands money or personal information to settle a complaint that has been filed against you. The voice may claim to be a Board employee (we only have 3, all female) and may use a name that you recognize. Keep in mind, their names are publicly available on the website, and these scammers do not mind a little identity theft added into the mix! (continued on pg. 7)



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The more real the scam feels, the more effective it is. However, in the recent occurrence of this scam, the caller claimed to be an investigator employed by the Board who was investigating a complaint and required money to pay a fine or required personal information (credit card, bank information) as part of the investigation. It is not unusual for these scams to include a threat.... for example, 'if you don't do what is requested, you will lose your license'. While the Board of PT does employ investigators, often retired/former police officers, and they may call you during the course of an investigation, those individuals will never request payment or personal information. These individuals also do not have the authority to take away your license to practice. Always remember that if you are being investigated by the Board of PT, you will know it. The process (found in the Administrative Code, CHAPTER 700-X-4 DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS) requires that you be made aware of the complaint, have an opportunity to respond with your side of the story, and have a right to appeal prior to any enforcement of fines/penalties. Any payment of fines or penalties will not occur over the phone, never use electronic methods, and are never required immediately upon notification of the complaint.

Unfortunately, online scams (phishing, smishing, hacking, ransomware, malware, cyberattacks, etc.) are much more subtle and often highly effective. An online article by Jonathan Greig (TechRepublic, March 12, 2020) claims that cybercriminals "make more than \$1.5 trillion in revenue each year, which is three times the \$514 billion Walmart makes annually." These attacks come directly at you through your cell phone, email, social media accounts or other online opportunities and they are very convincing, spoofing companies or products that you use daily. Most of us are familiar with the royal official from some foreign country who needs help to secure a large sum of money before they flee the country. We rarely fall for that. While that scam is still out there (and continues to make money for scammers), the new attacks are much more realistic. While the **Board of PT is currently unaware of any electronic use of our logo, 'company' identity or misrepresentation of our personnel**, here are some potential variations that a scammer might use.

A social media or email link sent by a 'friend' who writes, "Is this video of you? You could lose your license for this!" Notice that the bait uses something important to you – your license to practice – and creates a sense of urgency or curiosity. The arrival timing can also prey on busy times of the day when you are less likely to think and more likely to just click. That click may take you nowhere, a 'dead' link that actually downloads malware to your device to steal your personal information without your knowledge or it may take you to a realistic social media 'login page' that requires you to provide username, password or verify your account information, thus giving the scammer your information. (continued on pg. 8)

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1. A very official appearing email from the Board of PT, requesting that you click on a link to view a complaint, verify your license, update your information, download the attached file with very important information, etc. This type of phishing scam is particularly effective because it uses a company/identity that you respect, the logos and presentation are very convincing, and often the sender email address is very close to the real thing. Often there is also a sense of panic or urgency – a ‘do it now or else’ threat that may sound real, such as a claim that ‘our system has been hacked’ and you must respond ASAP to protect your personal information by clicking on a link. Often the email can include an attached document that requires your immediate attention. A lower tech version of this could be a letter in the mail that provides you with the web address of malicious link. If you follow the link, the landing website is again very familiar and official looking as it steals your information. Or worse, if you download and open the attachment you may actually be downloading malware to your device.
2. One of the latest scams involves a real person who arrives at your business, claiming to represent the Board of PT, your parent company, a tech company or other service. They appear very polished and professional and may have validating credentials that are convincing. While they might request the immediate payment of funds to settle a complaint, it is much more likely that they would claim to be auditing business practices or need to update/upgrade the computer. Ultimately, they are seeking to gain access to unattended computers, or manipulate unsuspecting individuals into logging into the system for them. Then with a few keystrokes they have hacked your system and all related information.

Unfortunately, the reason these scams are so successful is that they feel very real and leave a person with a very uneasy sense of needing to do the right thing in a very wrong situation. These scams are also making it increasingly difficult for legitimate folks to conduct business safely and effectively. So how can you protect yourself in these situations? Consider the following steps. (continued on pg. 9)

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1. **Stop and think.** Often, scams are successful because they take advantage of our hectic pace of life. Ask yourself if the request is logical or if you were expecting a request of this nature? Does the request match the usual business practices of the requesting organization? Have you ever provided your information to this company? Often a thoughtful pause can save you.
2. **Look for details.** Does the sender's email address look correct? Often scammers use a slight variation of the real thing that looks really convincing at a quick glance but proves to be problematic upon closer inspection. (For example, shelia.dodson@alabama.pt.gov looks really good but there are actually three things wrong... can you spot them?) Also, are there typos throughout the letter/email or does the language not flow correctly? When a scammer does not speak English as their first language, the text can lack the natural syntax of a native speaker/writer and can be a clue that a scam is at hand.
3. **Call and verify.** When a caller is demanding immediate information or payment, ask them for a call back number. But don't be surprised when they offer one.... any legitimate business would! Beware of any phone number provided for verification. Instead, take the time to look up the business phone number and call to verify the legitimacy of the request.
4. **Do your homework.** Independently login or go to the website in question. Any legitimate request to update your account, provide new information, or to make a payment can be done through your usual login method. Do not click links provided in an email or text but instead open a new browser window, go to the actual business website, and login to your account. If the request is real, this will allow you to safely complete the request.
5. **Avoid impulsive clicks.** Few things in life are actually an emergency, especially in the business world. Scammers often give you a time limit to create that sense of urgency or panic. Take the time to slow down, read carefully, call to verify, and follow the other tips in this section.
6. **Beware of attachments.** Never open an attached file that you were not expecting. Check the sender's email information carefully before opening. Call and verify with the sender. Go to the business website and download the information directly from the website. (For example, did you automatically open this Board of PT newsletter from the email to which it was attached, or did you go out to our website and download it for yourself? If you clicked to open, how did you know it was safe? Just because you trust us does not mean you should engage in risky behavior!) (continued on pg. 10)

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7. **Protect yourself.** Your personal information, passwords, and other private information (including your social media accounts) are just that – PERSONAL. Do not give it away freely. Be very careful about what you share and when you share it. Do not use logical, easy-to-guess passwords. According to NordPass, the most used password for 2020 was '123456', while 'password' made the top 5 list. Develop challenging passwords that are hard for others to figure out and do not use the same password multiple times.
8. **Educate yourself.** Learning about scammers and the techniques that they use equips you to be more vigilant in protecting yourself. If you are a business owner, consider electronic safety training as part of your annual training requirements. Your employees will use those skills more often than CPR!

As our world becomes increasingly more digital, legitimate business entities face incredible challenges to their ability to conduct their activities in a safe manner. The Board of Physical Therapy, and our constituents, are not immune to those threats. In fact, the challenges can be greater because we are required by law to publish a list of our licensees and their license numbers. The same public protection requirement that allows your patients to verify that you are a licensed healthcare provider can give scammers the data they need to launch an attack against you. However, the steps above can help you be more vigilant against those attacks, in addition to these final reminders. First, the Board of PT will not seek routine updates to your information through any method other than the annual online licensure renewal system. Even the renewal reminder emails should be taken as nothing more than a reminder – just to be safe, skip the provided link and go directly to the website to find the link for yourself. Second, the Board of PT will never require you to provide personal information or payments through unsecure sources, on an immediate timeline, or without your full understanding of the nature of a complaint filed against you. Third, if you are in trouble with the Board or your license is at risk, you will be aware of the situation, fully understand the complaint against you, and receive only official correspondence that can and will be verified. Finally, you are always welcome to call with your questions or concerns. We pride ourselves in friendly, helpful employees who are more than happy to answer your call, verify your request and help keep you safe.

Alina Adams, PT



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What's New for 2021 PT & PTA License Renewals

The 2021 license renewal period will begin on July 1, 2021! Your renewal must be completed by midnight on September 30, 2021, to avoid the expiration of your license. The renewal fees for 2021 are \$130.00 for PT's with a \$5.20 processing fee and \$93.00 for PTA's with a \$3.72 processing fee.

As you begin the renewal process, we are here to help you and resolve any problems, questions, and/or delays that you may encounter. When you select the correct box, it will give you instructions on uploading your certificates.

The 2021 Renewal will look a little different. The steps below are provided to reduce delays in completing your license renewal:

On the first page of the renewal application, you will be prompted for your license type, license number, and last four digits of your social security number. Once entered correctly, your profile should appear, and you may begin updating and entering information.

All licensees are required to upload their Continuing Education certificates this year.

1. There will be three options to choose from when you are renewing your license:

a. I graduated in the last calendar year and I am renewing for the first time.

You will be required to upload 2 hours of Alabama Jurisprudence.

b. I am renewing my license for the first time in Alabama. (I am not a new Graduate)

You will be required to upload 8 hours of CE's and 2 hours of Alabama Jurisprudence.

c. This is not my first license renewal in Alabama.

You will be required to upload 10 hours of CE's. (No Alabama Jurisprudence Required).

3. You can proceed with renewing your license online if you upload the required documents.

(continued on pg. 12)



**ALABAMA BOARD OF
PHYSICAL THERAPY**

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You are required to list your continuing education activities during the online renewal process. As you complete the payment process, licensees are randomly selected for **CE audit**. If you receive an **AUDIT** notification, you do not have to send your certificates since you were required to upload them.

The board does **NOT** mail license renewal certificates! Once you have completed the online renewal process, you will be given the option to print your license renewal certificate. Also, be sure to print a receipt for your records.

ALL New LICENSEES are encouraged to log onto our website www.pt.alabama.gov and go under the Services tab, click on **Licensee Online Profile** and create a new user account. You will be able to access your license certificate and your receipt throughout the year.

As always, if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions for improvement, please feel free to contact the board office. We are here to serve you and make this process as smooth as possible.

Sheila Wright Dopson

Executive Assistant III

**PLEASE KEEP YOUR ADDRESS UPDATED WITH THE
ALABAMA BOARD OF Physical Therapy**

"THE STATE DOES NOT FORWARD MAIL"



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NOTICES

Disciplinary Actions:

2020-06

Sexual Misconduct

Fine and CE Course

Closed & Approved: 10/15/2020

Lester Miller

2020-09

Practicing with an Expired License

Fine

Closed and Approved: 10/15/2020

Troy Mann

2020-010

Practicing with an Expired License

Fine

Closed & Approved: 10/15/2020

David Peterson

2020-011

Practicing with an Expired License

Fine

Closed & Approved: 1/14/2021

Mark Reid

2020-012

Practicing with an Expired License

Fine

Closed & Approved: 1/14/2021

Samantha Newcomb



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If you need anything, please feel free to call the board office:

(334) 242-4064

It is our pleasure to serve you.

Check out our website:

www.pt.alabama.gov

Check out the Alabama Physical Therapy Association:

www.ptalabama.org



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